

She Walks in Beauty
by: Lord Byron

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

Summary

On the evening of June 11, 1814, Byron attended a party with his friend. In the party he saw a beautiful woman dressed in black. Her beauty was astonishing and inspired him to write "She Walks in Beauty." He says that she walks like a night which has a clear weather and bright sky. The best things of dark, and the best things of light meet or gather together in her appearance and eyes. They combine in such a light which heaven doesn't agree to give to a bright day. If there is more shade and less light, only half of her beauty can be seen. This beauty appears on her face and hair which show how pure and valued is the body where they are existed. Over her cheeks and forehead you can see the best smiles ever. Also the colors of her face show how many days of honor she spent, her peace of mind, and her innocent heart of love.

Theme

As the title says, SHE walks in beauty, the main theme of the poem is the description of a lady, the list of certain qualities that the author considers give her beauty. Again, the theme of the poem is the woman's exceptional beauty, internal as well as external. The first stanza praises her physical beauty. The second and third stanzas praise both her physical and spiritual, or intellectual, beauty. The center of the poem is the lady, and the author expresses that central importance by capitalizing the whole pronoun SHE.

Vocabulary

The vocabulary that Byron uses is clear, simple and accessible to all kind of readers. The Semantic field is based on two branches: on the one hand the introduction of terms referring to the physical description of the lady: "face, cheek, brow, aspect, smiles, eyes". On the other hand they are in contrast with terms linked to a more internal description: "thought, grace, tender, peace, love, calm".

Tone

The tone used by the author is serious, and this can be observed in the strict use of the Structure : All the verses have 8 syllables, the rhymes are regular and perfect: ababab cdcdcd efefef.

Type of Work and Year Written

"She Walks in Beauty" is a lyric poem centering on the extraordinary beauty of a young lady. George Gordon Byron (commonly known as Lord Byron) wrote the poem in 1814 and published it in a collection, *Hebrew Melodies*, in 1815.

Rhyme Scheme and Meter

The rhyme scheme of the first stanza is ababab; the second stanza, cdcdcd; and the third stanza, efefef. All the end rhymes are masculine. The meter is mainly iambic tetrameter, a pattern in which a line has four pairs of unstressed and stressed syllables—eight syllables in all. The first two lines demonstrate the pattern followed throughout the poem except for line 6, which has nine syllables:

1.....2..... 3.....4
She WALKS | in BEAU | ty, LIKE | the NIGHT
1.....2..... 3.....4
Of CLOUD | less CLIMES | and STAR | ry SKIES

Use of Alliteration

Alliteration occurs frequently to enhance the appeal of the poem to the ear. The most obvious examples of this figure of speech include the following:

- Line 2:....cloudless climes; starry skies.
- Line 6:....day denies
- Line 8:....Had half
- Line 9:....Which waves
- Line 11...serenely sweet
- Line 14...So soft, so
- Line 18...Heart Whose

Other Figures of Speech

- Lines 1, 2:.....Simile comparing the movement of the beautiful woman to the movement of the skies
- Line 6:.....Metonymy, in which heaven is substituted for God or for the upper atmosphere
- Lines 8-10:.....Metaphor comparing grace, a quality, to a perceivable phenomenon
- Lines 11-12:.....Metaphor and personification comparing thoughts to people; metaphor and personification comparing the mind to a home (*dwelling-place*)
- Lines 13-16:.....Metaphor and personification comparing the woman's cheek and brow to persons who *tell of days in goodness spent*
- The poet uses personification such as “smiles that win”(15) and “heart whose love is innocent,”(18) to vividly describe the woman's soft smiles and pure heart.
- There is a use of synesthesia in the expression “tender light.”(5) Mixture of a visual sense and a tactile sense amplifies the image of softness that the woman possesses.
- Use of similes and metaphors in parts “like the night,”(1) “nameless grace / which waves in every raven trees,”(8-9) the poet compares “grace”(8), the quality of the woman, to an observable phenomenon “raven trees”(9) and makes the portrayal more clear.
- Byron also uses metonymies like “smiles”(15) to represent “the woman,” and “heaven”(6) to represent “god.”
- To give the poem a smooth flow, the poet uses alliteration in parts such as “cloudless climes,”(2) “starry skies,”(2) “day denies,”(6) and “serenely sweet.”(11).

These lines are taken from *Analyze she walks in beauty* written by Lord Byron. This poem takes the form of ABABAB-CDCCDCD-EFEFEF, each line composed of an iambic tetrameter. The theme of this poem is the woman's physical beauty along with her internal beauty. The first stanza praises her physical beauty. The second and third stanzas praise both her physical and spiritual, or intellectual, beauty. The center of the poem is the lady, and the author expresses that central importance by capitalizing the whole pronoun she. The tone used by the author is serious.

1st Stanza:

The first stanza of the poem describes the physical appearance of the woman. Here, the poet creates an image of a dark, clear sky with twinkling stars, and make a contrast between brightness and darkness. This contrast could mean diverse things, such as "black hair" and "white skin", or "deep, black eyes" and "clear, white parts of the eyes." The image created by this contract represents the cloth the woman is wearing; a black dress with sparkles on it. The darkness and brightness from lines above have "mellowed" to become a "tender light" and this gets contrasted with the expression "gaudy day," which inheres a negative connotation of excessiveness. Thus, the woman that the poet is praising is in great balance. Opposites "meet" in the woman to create a calm, soft image.

2nd Stanza:

The second stanza, the poet continues to praise the woman's appearance, the poet begins to extend this external beauty onto the woman's personality. The poet tells us that the woman's face is in such a perfect portion that just a slight change would damage it. From the expression "half impaired," we could once again draw out two significant meanings. First, it could mean that although the balance is destroyed, the beauty will still be half marvelous because it is only "half impaired." Or, if we focus on the notion of "imperfection" when something is in half, the poet might be emphasizing the current, "greatly balanced" status of the woman's appearance which should not be destroyed. The expression "nameless grace" is also significant. By adding the word "nameless" in front of the word "grace," the poet enlarged the woman's beauty and greatness, thereby suggesting it as something so priceless that can't be defined nor expressed as a name. We could also understand that the woman has a black hair from the expression "Which waves in every raven tress,." Compared with conventional qualities of "beauty" during the time when Byron wrote this poem, "black hair" which this woman has is extraordinary. This distinctiveness amplifies the woman's beauty, as she distinguishes herself from others. Lastly, the poet shows us how the woman's inner beauty is reflected in her appearance. "Dwelling-place," which is where the mind and the spirit belong, is also sweet and pure. With this perfect inner quality added to her external beauty, the woman becomes more perfect as she possesses beauty inside out.

3rd Stanza:

The last stanza also talks both about the woman's inner and outer characteristics. In the this stanza we discover that the poet's muse's face has intricacies which are capable of winning anyone's heart. When the woman smiled, a soft blush spread across her cheeks and brow which was calm yet full of expression. The smile of the woman combined with her blush produced an effect on the poet which enchanted him. They made him see the inner beauty of his muse. Her pretty face with its smiles and blush were windows to a beautiful mind and an innocent heart. They gave the poet an impression that the lady's days were spent doing good deeds which had a deep impact on the poet.